

2017 Oil - Gas Leasing EA - Public Review - 6.22.17

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Comments

Comment 1
 ID:

Comment Title: No Action Alternative on DOI-BLM-UT-G020-2017-0030-EA

Dear Bureau of Land Management,
 I am writing to comment on the Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-UT-G020-2017-0030-EA for the December 2017 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale, for oil and gas leases in Utah's San Rafael Swell area. I encourage you to choose the "No Action Alternative." The region proposed for drilling, in the Molen Reef region of the San Rafael Swell, is rich in archaeological resources that would be damaged by the proposed leases for drilling. Leasing in this area has twice been deferred (in 2013 and 2015), with your agency finding both times that there was inadequate information existing on archaeological resources in the region to determine if drilling was appropriate. It is my understanding that your agency has still not conducted any further archaeological inventories of the proposed lease areas, and that only 0.6% of the proposed parcels have ever been surveyed for archaeological resources. There are, however, thousands of known archaeological sites in the San Rafael Swell area, and probably multitudes of undiscovered sites, which would be damaged by the road and well construction associated with drilling.

In addition to my archaeological concerns, I am concerned 94% of the proposed drilling area is wilderness quality land. As your EA states, "For the 15 proposed lease parcels, 94% of the acres within the nominated lease parcel are within lands determined to have wilderness characteristics (page 22)." I believe that we should preserve what wilderness quality lands we have left rather than build oil and gas wells and roads all over them. Once you develop them, those wilderness qualities, including the opportunities for solace and recreation, are forever lost. Based on these concerns, I believe these leases should be withdrawn and the "No Action Alternative" chosen.

Thank you for your consideration,
 Emma Kelsey

Submission Classification

Response Type: Front Office Submission Form
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